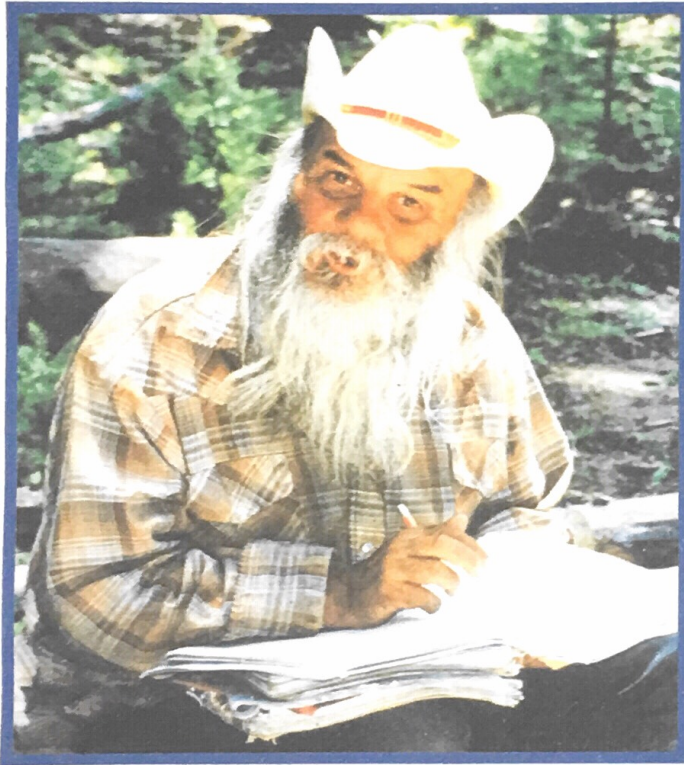




# Rainbow Family

## Life Stories



*by Jodey Bateman.  
Interviews with Rainbow  
Family of Living Light  
folks conducted between  
1977 and 2008.  
Scanned in 2018.  
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contacted on Facebook.*

04.5

Bo - "The Hog Farm"

- interviewed at the 1978 Oregon  
Gathering

6 pages

[04.5]



## Bo - The Hog Farm

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I interviewed Bo at the 1978 Oregon Gathering. At that gathering, the Hog Farm had a kitchen that specialized in granola.

The Hog Farm is a group that has been a major part of counter-culture history. Wavy Gravy, who in the Fifties was the Beat poet, Hugh Romney, has written a good book on the development of the Hog Farm. According to Wavy's book, the Hog Farm got its name because the group bought the pig that was nominated for president by the anti-war demonstrators outside the 1968 Democratic Convention in Chicago.

Since then, the Hog Farm has done considerable work bringing supplies and keeping order for large demonstrations and rock festivals - a major example being the huge Woodstock rock festival in 1969. Wavy Gravy helps a lot with child care at Rainbow Gatherings.

Bo's bus, the Gray Ghost, that he used with the Hog Farm shows again the continuity of the counter-culture from the Beats to Rainbow. Bo heard that Jack Kerouac's Beat novel, On the Road (published in 1955), was written on the Gray Ghost bus. Doug Ward, a Los Angeles poet and artist who has studied Kerouac's life, tells me that only part of On the Road could have been written on the Gray Ghost. However, Bo bought the Gray Ghost from Neil Cassidy, Kerouac's friend, whose adventures with Kerouac in 1949 were the basic story of On the Road. Cassidy traveled in 1965 and 1966 on the Gray Ghost with Ken Kesey's Merry Pranksters giving out free LSD to introduce it to people, mostly on the West Coast.

In spring, 1978, I saw the Gray Ghost parked in the back yard of the Austin Rainbow House - which is discussed in a later section of life stories in this book.

Bo was a promoter of the art fair where Barry and Garrick first discussed the Colorado Gathering. He knew Barry's group as the Family of Three Lights.



from the lights they saw when they entered Marble Mountain Valley. I  
 BO - I was born January 9, 1942, in Yuba City, California. My father has  
 been a welder for 60 years. He used to be a semi-professional boxer. My  
 mother is from Texas. She was in the Ziegfeld Follies. Then as she got  
 older, she got out of dancing and became a registered nurse.

I went to a Seventh Day Adventist boarding school. They were good people,  
 but I couldn't dig their religion. Something told me I didn't agree with  
 their religion, but I didn't know what it was. I went as far as the  
 tenth grade. I had started smoking marijuana. Then I was just  
 disgusted with the bullshit they were teaching - like that Columbus  
 discovered America and that the Indians were savages. My father's  
 mother was an Oklahoma Cherokee. I studied a lot about Indians  
 when I was a kid. They intrigued me.

After my mother died, I decided to go traveling to see what else there  
 was. I got a job for a logging company setting chokers. I wasn't afraid  
 of the danger. I decided that was the way to make the most money  
 the quickest. Then I bought a little school bus and got some people  
 to travel with me. I was 18 years old. It was 1960.

I sold my bus and went in the Army in 1963 when I was 21 because  
 I wanted to keep a clean record, which I still have, so I wouldn't be a  
 suspicious character. I don't believe in aggression, so I didn't  
 just take and run from the draft. I knew if I volunteered, I would  
 get out because I had epilepsy. It wasn't really severe, but I got  
 a discharge in six months.

In '64 and '65, I went to a trade school in the Bay Area and took  
 mechanics. I lived in Sausalito. My dad being a welder, I knew how  
 to weld, so I did that in the daytime and went to school at night.

I took acid in 1966. I got it on the streets in San Francisco. I took it  
 out in the country in Marin County and got real stoned. In '67, I traveled  
 around the country looking for something. What it was, I wasn't real  
 sure, but I was trying to get together a philosophy of life.

I started trucking with the Hog Farm in '67. In '68, I got a bus



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called the Gray Ghost from Neil Cassidy and the Merry Pranksters. I found out the book On the Road was written by Jack Kerouac on the Gray Ghost. It was a '41 International, one of the first freak buses. It was a magic bus. I decided I wanted to help people. I went to rock festivals with the Hog Farm and helped cook food for the festivals and served the food to people and went on runs to the festivals. I helped set up festivals with the Hog Farm at Woodstock, Dallas and Atlanta in 1969. We helped with bumper cars, people freaking out on drugs. The Hog Farm was part of my family because I believed in their philosophy of do unto others as you would have them do unto you and a free life style - everybody works together. We tried to keep people from getting busted at demonstrations. When we saw a guy getting busted, a whole bunch of us would go over and stand up for him so they couldn't take him away.

My rebellious spirit against what the Establishment was putting on with people got me in the revolution. I was against the Establishment's aggressive activities, such as killing people, victimizing brothers that was trying to bring out things against the politicians. I helped with the revolutionary activities in 1969 - the Seattle Liberation Front. We handed out a lot of papers from the Gray Ghost. We put up posters about the revolution and went to marches and protests. I got out of the violence part of the revolution. The violence part evolves through history - wars and wars and wars. If you hit somebody, they're gonna hit you back, and if you've got something better, they're gonna say, "Hm m!"

The Motherfuckers were friends of mine. They helped out lots of times. I wouldn't accept swiped food from them if I knew it, because I don't believe in stealing nothing from nobody but them and the STP Family gave me money for food when I came through Boulder. I knew STP John and LB - it stood for Little Brother - and Bishop and Deputy Dog and Little Bear and Stinkin' Lincoln and the others. Bishop OD'd on reds. LB got killed in Boulder. A policeman came in. It looked like LB was pulling for his gun and he was pulling for his ID and he got shot. STP John was killed the week before by the police. They were always giving



him a bad time. They put Stinkin' Lincoln in the Colorado Penitentiary for three years. He's in New York, got him a rock band.

In 1970, I left the Gray Ghost and ended up in Marble Mount, Washington, and met the Family of Three Lights - it was called then. It was a commune. They moved to Eugene, Oregon, and ended up being called the Rainbow Family. Barry Plunker was with them. Then they moved to Drain, Oregon.

In May, 1970, at Bellingham, Washington, I was one of the promoters of the Sky River Rocking Art Fair. I lost \$30,000 on that. A guy ripped off the main gate for a lot of money and split in a helicopter.

Then I met a lady named Lynn in Boulder and we traveled together until 1975. We had a little son whose name is Sky. I don't know where she is. I'd like to see Sky. During the time my son was born, 1971, I started getting into cultural revolution, wanting to get together a collective life style. We traveled together in search of this in another bus I bought called the Sun Finder.

I got to Granby, Colorado, a month and a half before any of the Rainbow Family got there. They said they were gonna have the 1972 Gathering on Table Mountain, which was nothing but a big rock pile. No water was there and no vegetation. I met this guy, Paul Getzenborfer, who owned the land around Strawberry Lake. He was a good, Christian man. I turned him on to the Rainbow Family, and he turned them on to Strawberry Lake. Then people started getting busted by the National Guard because Governor Love of Colorado wouldn't give permission for the gathering. Then me and my old lady and Paul Getzenborfer went to Governor Love and asked him to call off the National Guard and give us the permit to have the gathering on the private land at Strawberry Lake, and he did. We talked to him in person. He called the lieutenant governor and called off the National Guard. Instead, the National Guard helped - they gave medical supplies to the gathering. But the state police were still hassling hitch hikers to the gathering.



and busting them

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There was also vigilante committees around Granby to stop the gathering. They had guns and had bought out all the ammunition in three counties. We went out and talked to the vigilante committees. They ended up helping us after this meeting, giving us tractors to clear the land and tools to dig shifters. They were beautiful.

Some of the politicians were still against it, but generally the gathering was legal. The government supplied the gatherings. After going through all this bullshit, I personally was bunned out by the Rainbow Family clan when they got there. They had a lot of ego trips going down like all of us do.

I left four days before the gathering and went to Scottsdale, Arizona, in my bus to help the victims of a cyclone. I stayed there the rest of the year, enjoying my son and my old lady. I went to the 1973 Gathering as a spectator. I was busy with making and selling jewelry and other trips, trying to make enough money to buy some land. I went to Oregon and worked in the logging. I went to the 1974 Utah Gathering just as a spectator and I was at the Arkansas Gathering in 1975 just for one day.

Then in 1976 when I went to the Montana Gathering, I had just split up with my old lady, so I brought a lot of food for everyone that I bought with my last paycheck from logging. Me and Leon made coffee for people at the Hobo Kitchen there all day, all night. A brother at the Montana Gathering fell off a cliff and I ran Michael Buffalo's bus to help guide the helicopter in to rescue him, because Michael Buffalo's bus had a CB unit. The brother was in bad shape, but he's OK now, thank God. There was a general people's effort to save that brother. People were chanting in a circle for him. It was beautiful.

I went to New Mexico after that and got my land. It was something I had been hoping for all this time. A place to raise my own stuff and be self-sufficient, trading with my neighbors instead of money. The land is near Taos, New Mexico. I built a solar greenhouse on it to



raise vegetables. I built it with my own hands out of natural materials—adobe, wood and rock. I got a goat to make milk for cheese. There are 20 people within a five mile radius of me, and we all trade with each other.

I went up to Denver on Michael Buffalo's bus with Walking Crow. In Denver I heard my dad was dead. I found out later it wasn't true. But I was all upset at the time. Me and Walking Crow got drunk and I got busted for possession of a hunting knife. Any kind of knife is a crime in Denver. The cops in Colorado are stricter than most places, which is why I don't hang out there.

I went back to Taos and fixed up my greenhouse. I raised a lot of marijuana and different kinds of vegetables—tomatoes, squash, onions, carrots—a lot of chile peppers.

I went to the 1977 Gathering in New Mexico just as a spectator for a couple of days. Since then, I haven't been anywhere from Taos until the Oregon Gathering. I've been building on my home, learning plumbing, cutting firewood.

I think there are some really fine earth people—teachers as well as students—in the Rainbow Family. I love them very much. A lot of people don't get off to them because of their ego trips. But they are the ones putting on the gathering, and it has put them in a position of strain. They have mellowed out incredibly since the first gathering in Granby. They are the ones who put on the gatherings that supply us with knowledge. It never fails that everytime I come to the gathering, I learn something that is valuable to me. I'm going to try to make it to all the gatherings from now on. It's up to us to take the knowledge we have learned at the gatherings to our tribes and around the world.

[For more about Bo, see Walking Crow's life story.]